

## RICHMOND'S BUILDING INSPECTOR — SAYS —

Never in the history of Richmond have the building operations assumed anything approaching the present activity, nor can the present activity be classed in any sense of the word as a "Building Boom," because the records of this office show that there has been a steady and uniform growth in building operations from the organization of this office, year by year, down to the present time, as will be clearly demonstrated by the following figures:

The year 1907 (estimated).....	\$2,000,000.00	The year 1909.....	\$3,574,812.00
The year 1908.....	3,169,431.00	The year 1910.....	4,012,822.00
The year 1911 (up to September 1st).....		\$4,692,575.00	

This steady increase and the large amount of building has not been brought about by any special activity in any particular line, but it has been of a most general nature, reaching to all sections of the city, and has included everything from a private stable to a nineteen-story skyscraper.

Since the organization of the Building Inspector's Office, on August 1, 1907, to September 1, 1911, there has been authorized in new and repair work the enormous sum of \$16,218,962.00, which probably represents at least 25 per cent. of the total assessment of this city for buildings, exclusive of public buildings, churches and non-taxable property.

While nine-tenths of the work authorized by this office since its organization has represented the investment of capital by individuals, firms and private corporations, yet the national, State and city governments have not been lacking in their estimation of the increasing needs of this city, as the Federal Government is now erecting a most magnificent post-office and court building on Main Street, while the State of Virginia has built a commodious annex to its Library Building, and the city of Richmond has eclipsed all previous records in the past four years by its unusual, lavish and liberal expenditure of money in the erection of a high school, several district schools, a magnificent armory and market building, several fire engine houses, and a large exhibition building covering about two acres of ground. Obviously it has been somewhat of a friendly contest between governmental expenditures for good buildings as against the investment of capital by private concerns and individuals.

Too much cannot be said, of course, concerning projects now in contemplation, but the outlook at this time clearly indicates that the present building activity will continue, if not increase, for an indefinite time, and that better and larger buildings will have to be erected to meet the growing demands of the merchants and manufacturers of this community, whose business have, in lots of instances, grown so rapidly that it has been crowded out of the small buildings that had served their purposes in the past.

The figures above given do not include any of the suburbs adjacent to this city, and as the outlying sections have shared the same wonderful activity that has prevailed within the city limits, it is reasonable to estimate that \$1,000,000.00 yearly has been expended in the erection and repair of buildings in these contiguous territories.

The office buildings of this city which have been erected in recent times have been filled immediately upon completion, and there is yet a good field for buildings of this class.

Reinforced concrete warehouses and manufacturing plants have been built in rapid succession in all sections of the city, only to be immediately occupied and put in use.

Religious organizations have not been derelict in the matter of erecting new buildings, as numbers of churches in all parts of the city have been erected within the past four years.

To house the population that has been brought in by the erection and operation of these warehouses and manufacturing plants it has been necessary to erect hundreds of brick and frame dwellings and dozens of apartment houses in every locality within the corporate limits, while the traveling public has overrun existing hostleries and caused the erection of several large fireproof hotels in the centre of the city.

No line of business has failed to contribute its share to the building up of this city, and from present indications future demands for new structures will be equal to, if not greater, than the large demand for buildings within the past four years.

In conclusion, I am satisfied that the amount of building now under way in this city, and the amount that has been authorized from year to year, is greater than any city of its size in this country, and that it has equaled the building operations of older cities with larger populations, which fact can only be construed in one way, and that is that in building Richmond is in the front rank of American cities.

